

## GOLD and IGDIs....Unique AND Complementary

GOLD and IGDIs have been in use in Iowa for several years. Legislation in July 2013 (House File 215) mandated the administration of GOLD to all children participating in any school district-based preschool classroom, while Iowa's Multi-Tiered System of Support supports IGDIs as part of an early warning system to help improve early literacy in Iowa.

To build understanding for how GOLD and IGDIs can be used together as part of a comprehensive assessment system, a general description about each will first be provided.

	GOLD	IGDIs
Why?	To observe and document children's learning and development over time; to support, guide, and inform planning and instruction; to identify children who might benefit from special help, screening, or further evaluation; and to report and communicate with family members and others.	To seasonally screen children on early literacy development indicators aligned with later school success as part of a multi-tiered system of supports.
Who?	Ages Birth to Kindergarten; required in Iowa for all children participating in a preschool based in a school district.	In Iowa, 4-year-old children participating in a preschool program under the auspices of a school district.
How?	Based on analysis of portfolio evidence	Direct administration (5-10 minutes per child)
What?	<p><b>All developmental and content areas</b> including Physical, Language, Social-emotional, Cognitive, Literacy, Math, Science*, Social studies*, and Arts*</p> <p>(Aligned to Iowa Early Learning Standards)</p>	<p><b>Early Literacy</b> measured by:  Picture Naming (Oral Language &amp; Vocabulary)  Rhyming (Phonological Awareness)  Alliteration (Phonological Awareness)  Sound Identification (Alphabet Knowledge)  "Which One Doesn't Belong?" (Comprehension)</p> <p>(Skills represented in the Iowa Early Learning Standards)</p>

\*Optional

Teaching Strategies GOLD is an online, ongoing, portfolio-based assessment system for children from birth to kindergarten. GOLD blends portfolio-based assessment for **all** areas of development and learning with performance tasks for selected predictors of school success in the areas of literacy and numeracy. Specifically, the developmental domains on GOLD are: Social-Emotional, Physical, Language, Cognitive, Literacy, Mathematics, Science and Technology, and The Arts. Three times a year, teachers complete a progress checkpoint for each child across the required developmental domains (see Table below) based on analysis of portfolio evidence. Levels used to indicate how a child is doing at a checkpoint are based on widely held expectations for child development. Documentation for each child may also be collected on an ongoing basis across areas of development and examined regularly to assist teachers in completing progress checkpoints.

IGDIs (Individual Growth and Development Indicators) have been approved by the Iowa Department of Education for screening 4-year-olds in the area of early literacy. IGDIs are administered to 4-year-olds three times a year to identify children who may need additional help as they work towards becoming successful readers. Specifically, the IGDIs assessment screens on the following skills:

- Reading letter names and identifying letter sounds
- Oral language and vocabulary (e.g., Correctly labeling pictures)
- Identifying first sounds they hear in a word (e.g., “Cat” begins with /c/)
- Comprehension (e.g., Finding a picture in a group that doesn’t relate)
- Rhyming

Building awareness for how GOLD and IGDIs can be used *together* as part of a comprehensive assessment system has been challenging. To increase understanding how GOLD and IGDIs complement one another, one must understand the different purposes that each assessment can serve. Assessments are built to serve specific purposes. Because of this, they often work better for some things than they do for others. In reality, the same assessment might have some utility for more than one purpose. The key is that it is important to know what purpose you have when you look at the data – what decisions you are going to be making with the data. What follows are definitions of terms used for different purposes of assessment. Then, a comparison of IGDIs and GOLD for the primary purposes of assessment is provided. Non-education examples are included to further illustrate the concept behind each assessment purpose.

Assessment Purpose	Description	Example
<i>Screening</i>	Universal screening of all children to predict children who might need additional supports to be successful versus those who do not. Screening results predict in general, what a child's end-of-year performance might be.	If you go visit the doctor's office, they take your temperature, and blood pressure, for example, as a screening to determine if additional testing/examination is needed. If you are running a fever, it is an indicator that your body is fighting something. If your body temperature is normal, it is an indicator that you are not fighting infection, for example.
<i>Diagnostic</i>	A systematic process used to examine an individual's strengths and weaknesses within a skill area. True diagnostic assessment should be comprehensive within the skill area(s) assessed. Informal diagnostic assessment uses the available information, but may not be systematic and thorough because the test is not comprehensive.	Depending on the circumstances, a doctor may use available information for diagnostic purposes, or may call for specific test. If a patient is having difficulty breathing, is it OK to have the doctor diagnose based on whatever information is available (interview and observation only), or is it necessary to request specific diagnostic tests in order to systematically examine all of the important factors that relate to the breathing problem? It depends on the cost and invasiveness of the tests, relative to the urgency and severity of the breathing problem.
<i>Formative Assessment</i>	A process of assessment used during instruction by teachers and children that provides feedback to adjust ongoing instruction to improve children's achievements of intended instructional outcomes. Provides feedback to teachers and children about what is and isn't mastered yet.	During physical therapy for rehabilitation after an injury, the therapist may watch for specific indicators of the patient's response to the treatment and adjust the therapy accordingly. The therapist may also devise informal checks to see how the patient's range of motion, etc. is improving, and how daily activities are affected.
<i>Progress Monitoring</i>	Frequent, precise and efficient measurement of a skill that is sensitive to growth and shows change over shorter periods of time. Used as an indicator of whether interventions are working or a change is needed. Used most often for children receiving extra supports.	Someone with asthma might check their progress with regular use of a tool that measures the air pressure on an exhale. It turns out to be a good indicator of the lung functioning. Most of us don't need this measure, but for someone monitoring asthma medication, it is quick, easy, and sensitive to change in breathing status.
<i>Summative</i>	An assessment designed to provide information regarding the level of child, program, or school at an <i>end point</i> in time. The results may be used to: make a judgement about the effectiveness of an educational program; conclude whether a child mastered intended skills during a classroom project/study; or make a judgement about whether a program met local, state, and federal accountability requirements.	At the end of a weight-loss challenge, several measures might be taken to determine if you met your goals (depending on your goals for increasing healthiness) including a weigh-in, BMI measurement, and measuring your waist, hips, etc. to determine if you lost inches. While you might monitor weight more often, you probably won't measure inches or BMI as frequently.

Purpose	GOLD	IGDIs
Screening	NO	YES
Diagnostic	Potentially <sup>1</sup>	NO
Formative Assessment	YES <sup>2</sup>	NO
Progress Monitoring	NO	Not yet <sup>3</sup>
Summative	YES <sup>4</sup>	YES

**Notes:**

<sup>1</sup> While not necessarily designed as a comprehensive diagnostic test, informal analysis of child documentation can lead to an understanding of strengths and weaknesses.

<sup>2</sup> This would be appropriate only if GOLD is used as an ongoing portfolio of child learning and development, including reflection on child progress and if changes in instruction were made based on interpretation of complete information in GOLD.

<sup>3</sup> There is work in progress to validate IGDIs measures for progress monitoring but the evidence of the effectiveness of IGDIs for progress monitoring is not there yet.

<sup>4</sup> GOLD may be used as an interim summative assessment for measuring growth from fall to winter, winter to spring, or fall to spring.

**GOLD:**

- Screening: The test was not designed for screening. In fact, the authors have explicitly stated that GOLD is not meant as a screening measure.
- Diagnostic: While not intended as diagnostic by the publisher, results can indicate areas of strength and weakness through careful interpretation processes.
- Formative Assessment: When GOLD is fully implemented, teachers can upload documentation of what children demonstrate on an ongoing basis and use that documentation to plan small groups and plan individualized scaffolding. Under full implementation, it is the primary intended purpose to use GOLD for formative decision making.
- Progress Monitoring (PM): GOLD can't work for progress monitoring. The GOLD assessment itself was not designed by the publisher for frequent monitoring of progress, nor has it been validated for this purpose.
- Summative: GOLD's progress checkpoints may also be used to summarize children's status compared to reasonable expectations for development and learning at 3 times during the year.

**IGDIs:**

- Screening: Tests have been validated for use in screening. This means that specific research and development was done to make sure the tests do a good job of efficiently identifying children predicted to be on track for success vs. those who may be at risk.
- Diagnostic: Individual tests may indicate strengths and weaknesses, but were not designed as diagnostic inventories. Items on each test were selected to screen effectively, not to sample all relevant skills.
- Formative Assessment: The IGDIs tests are not administered frequently enough to inform ongoing instruction.
- Progress Monitoring (PM): There is work in progress to validate IGDIs measure for PM but the evidence of the effectiveness of IGDIs to monitor progress is not there yet.

- Summative: Screening results can answer summative questions about universal instruction (e.g., How effective was instruction and learning opportunities provided to all children? Did most children meet the target score/benchmark? Do we need to change instruction and learning opportunities provided to all children?)

In an *assessment system* for early childhood, GOLD plays the role of providing summative data about young children's growth on curriculum-based objectives across areas of development from fall to winter and from winter to spring. GOLD is meant to be used on a regular basis, *i.e.*, documentation frequently uploaded for each child on a variety of objectives, with reflection on progress or lack of progress. If GOLD is used as intended, it may be useful to help make decisions about changes to improve curriculum and instruction or supports for groups or individual children.

In an *assessment system* for early childhood, IGDIs *complements* GOLD by serving the purpose of universal screening for emerging literacy for all children. Benchmarks identified based on research allow for decision making up to three times a year about a child's need for additional opportunities for learning beyond what is provided to all children. IGDIs data may also be used summatively, e.g., in the spring to address, for example:

1. Did the kids who were at risk get better by spring?
2. Did all children improve? In all measured domains? As a group, in which domains are the strengths and weaknesses? How might I use this information to improve classroom instruction, routines, and opportunities?

GOLD is a developmental comprehensive classroom assessment; IGDIs specifically addresses emerging literacy. It is also important to recognize that GOLD serves assessment purposes that IGDIs cannot (*i.e.*, formative assessment), and IGDIs serves assessment purposes that GOLD cannot (*i.e.*, screening). In conclusion, while GOLD and IGDIs serve unique purposes, they are complementary of one another. Both contribute to a comprehensive early childhood assessment system.